

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for optimizing character string placing, comprising:

means for drawing prospective guide lines as virtual horizontal lines arranged in parallel at regular intervals in a demarcated region;

means for selecting, from among the prospective guide lines, specific prospective guide lines that are arranged in parallel and are longer than a longest horizontal segment of an area of a character string;

means for specifying one of the specific prospective guide lines that is located at the center of an arrangement of the specific guide lines arranged in parallel in a vertical direction; and

means for placing the character string along said one of the specific prospective guide lines; and

means for centering placement to arrange the placed character string in such a manner that the distances between the demarcated region segments that demarcate the demarcated region and dots on character string region segments that demarcate the character string region are made uniform.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

means for adjusting placement to move the placed character string vertically or horizontally within the demarcated region.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) A computer program product embodied in a tangible non-transitory computer readable medium, the computer program product being configured to optimize character string placement by performing operations comprising:

~~for optimizing character string placing, the computer program product stored on a computer readable medium and adapted to perform operations comprising:~~

~~performing a first horizontal placement or a first tilting placement on all demarcated regions;~~

~~performing a pull-out placement on each demarcated region in which the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement cannot be performed, assuming that the character string placed in the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement has not been placed;~~

~~performing a second horizontal placement or a second tilting placement to place the character string placed in the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement, and, when the placement cannot be performed because of the character string placed through the pull-out placement, nullifying the character string placed through the pull-out placement hindering the placement, thereby placing the character string through the second horizontal placement or the second tilting placement; and~~

a centering placement to arrange the already placed character string in such a manner that the distances between demarcated region segments that demarcate the demarcated region and dots on character string region segments that demarcates the character string region are made uniform, after the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement.

7. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 6, wherein the operations further comprise: ~~function comprises:~~

an adjusting placement to move the character string vertically or horizontally within the demarcated region, when the character sting cannot be placed through the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement.

8. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 6, wherein the operations further comprise: ~~function comprises:~~

a replacing placement, after the second horizontal placement or the second tilting placement, to place alternative display objects such as characters, other character strings, symbols, or graphics, instead of the character string that cannot be placed in the first horizontal placement or the first tilting placement, the pull-out placement, or second horizontal placement or the second tilting placement.

9. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the operations further comprise: ~~function comprises:~~

the pull-out placement again prior to the replacing placement.

10. (Canceled)